

Department of Permitting and Inspections

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MEMORANDUM

To: Design Advisory Board
From: Scott Gustin
Re: 362 Riverside Avenue
Date: October 27, 2020

File: ZP21-0409CA/MA
Location: 362 Riverside Avenue
Zone: NAC-R **Ward:** 1E
Parking District: Multi-Modal Mixed Use
Date application accepted: October 19, 2020 (incomplete pending lot merger plat)
Applicant/ Owner: BlackRock Construction / Douglas Boyden
Request: 64-Unit senior housing facility and related site work

Background:

362 Riverside Ave:

- 6/30/92; Approval of renovations to existing single family home.
- 8/6/98; Approval of lot line adjustment.

366 Riverside Ave:

- 8/6/89; Approval of lot line adjustment.

370 Riverside Ave:

- 5/7/96; Approval to remove and replaced detached garage.

374 Riverside Ave:

- No prior zoning actions.

Overview:

The applicant is seeking approval to construct a 64-unit senior housing complex with related site improvements. The site presently consists of 4 detached single dwelling units on individual lots under common ownership. The applicant proposes to demolish these homes and to merge the parcels into one parcel as part of the proposed development. The project is large enough to require "major impact" review and will be reviewed by the Conservation Board and Development Review Board in addition to the Design Advisory Board. The applicants did sketch plan review of this proposal with the Development Review Board on December 17, 2019.

Part 1: Land Division Design Standards

No land division is proposed. Several lots will be merged into one.

Part 2: Site Plan Design Standards

Sec. 6.2.2 Review Standards

The programs and services of the City of Burlington are accessible to people with disabilities. For accessibility information call 865-7188 (for TTY users 865-7142).

(a) Protection of Important Natural Features:

The property is not affected by any significant natural features as identified by the Natural Resource Protection Overlay map. The properties contain some trees and open lawn areas. Trees will be removed in order to clear the site for redevelopment with the senior housing facility.

(b) Topographical Alterations:

The project plans contain information as to existing and proposed grades. The site is sloped uphill away from Riverside Avenue and will remain so. Fairly limited topographic alteration is proposed. In large part, the building will be built with grades largely as they are now with some cut into the slope for the rear part of the building and related parking.

(c) Protection of Important Public Views:

There are no protected public views from or through this property.

(d) Protection of Important Cultural Resources:

Burlington's architectural and cultural heritage shall be protected through sensitive and respectful redevelopment, rehabilitation, and infill. Archeological sites likely to yield information important to the city's or the region's pre-history or history shall be evaluated, documented, and avoided whenever feasible. Where the proposed development involves sites listed or eligible for listing on a state or national register of historic places, the applicant shall meet the applicable development and design standards pursuant to Sec. 5.4.8(b).

The project site has no known archaeological significance. It contains no archaeological site points, nor is it located within an archaeologically sensitive area. The buildings to be demolished are not included in an historic register.

(e) Supporting the Use of Renewable Energy Resources:

See Sec. 6.3.2 (f).

(f) Brownfield Sites:

The subject property is not included on the Vermont DEC Hazardous Site List. It is, however, close to a former city dump (now developed with Riverwatch condos) that is included on the hazardous site list. During sketch plan review, it was advised that the applicant do at least preliminary soil testing for contaminants that may influence project design. There is no indication within the application materials that such testing was done. Whether soil testing was done or not needs to be confirmed.

(g) Provide for nature's events:

Special attention shall be accorded to stormwater runoff so that neighboring properties and/or the public stormwater drainage system are not adversely affected. All development and site disturbance shall follow applicable city and state erosion and stormwater management guidelines in accordance with the requirements of Art 5, Sec 5.5.3.

The applicants have provided an erosion control plan and a post-construction stormwater management plan for review by the City's stormwater engineering staff. Their approval will be a condition of any decision.

Design features which address the effects of rain, snow, and ice at building entrances, and to provisions for snow and ice removal or storage from circulation areas shall also be incorporated.

Building entries are sheltered. Much of the parking is underneath the building. The driveway accessing the parking adjoins green space sufficient for wintertime snow storage. Similarly, there is adjacent green space for snow storage related to the open parking area.

(h) Building Location and Orientation:

The subject property is bordered on three sides by city streets. Appropriately, the proposed building is oriented towards Riverside Avenue and is set close to that front property line. The development pattern along this stretch of Riverside Avenue is irregular, and there is little "street wall" to reinforce. The building as proposed will strengthen the streetscape along this section of road.

(i) Vehicular Access:

A single primary curb cut and driveway will serve the proposed development. As recommended by this criterion, the driveway access will be along a secondary street, rather than Riverside Avenue. Sight lines at the driveway/street intersection appear to be adequate. A second curb cut and driveway will provide service vehicle access. It is unclear why a second, separate driveway is needed for service vehicle access.

(j) Pedestrian Access:

The building's primary entrance facing Riverside Avenue connects to the public sidewalk with a front walkway. The building's secondary frontage along Hillside Terrace is also served by a pedestrian walkway connecting an interior side entrance with the public sidewalk. The walkways are to be concrete and differentiated from the asphalt driveways.

(k) Accessibility for the Handicapped:

Handicap parking and access points are provided within the sheltered rear parking area. The primary entrance along Riverside Avenue is accessed by steps as well as by a level walkway. Additional accessibility provisions are under the purview of the building inspector.

(l) Parking and Circulation:

Given that the proposed building faces city streets on three sides, there is no back side to the building. That said, all of the parking is set behind the building as viewed from Riverside Avenue. Much of the parking is underneath the proposed building. A portion of the parking will be uncovered to the east. Screening of the parking as viewed from Hillside Terrace (west and east) will be provided with proposed landscaping and also by grade. As the parking extends south away from the building it drops below surrounding grades. Parking and circulation are dimensionally accurate per the standards of Article 8.

(m) Landscaping, Fences, & Retaining Walls:

A landscaping plan has been provided and depicts planting locations and species. Plantings are concentrated along the building's primary frontage facing Riverside Avenue. It continues around the corner along the secondary western frontage. Entryways are accented, and screening is provided. Additional plantings will serve to screen the rear parking area as viewed from Hillside Terrace.

Limited fencing is proposed for screening of parking and the dumpster enclosure. No fence detail is evident and is needed.

Several stretches of retaining wall are proposed where required by grade. Pre-formed "redi-rock" style blocks will be used. Visibility is limited but appears consistent with sections of exposed building foundation.

(n) Public Plazas and Open Space:

No public plazas are proposed. Given the limited amount of available ground space around the building, outdoor community space for residents will be provided on 4th story roof decks. Such location will likely afford residents expansive views of the Intervale and beyond.

(o) Outdoor Lighting:

Where exterior lighting is proposed the applicant shall meet the lighting performance standards as per Sec 5.5.2.

An exterior lighting plan has been provided and includes fixture types, locations, and illumination levels. The fixture types are acceptable – all are cut-off except for one. The one exception is acceptable as a low-output lighting fixture. Entryway and walkway illumination levels are acceptable. The parking lot lighting; however, is too bright. Maximum permissible illumination is 4 footcandles with a 20:1 uniformity ratio. Lighting levels go up to 7.4 footcandles and need to be adjusted downward to conform to this standard.

(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design:

Exterior storage areas, machinery and equipment installations, service and loading areas, utility meters and structures, mailboxes, and similar accessory structures shall utilize setbacks, plantings, enclosures and other mitigation or screening methods to minimize their auditory and visual impact on the public street and neighboring properties to the extent practicable.

A dumpster enclosure sits between the building and Hillside Terrace. While the location is not ideal, the enclosure is screened and is tucked into the corner of the building. Mailboxes are located within the residential lobby.

Utility and service enclosures and screening shall be coordinated with the design of the principal building, and should be grouped in a service court away from public view. On-site utilities shall be placed underground whenever practicable. Trash and recycling bins and dumpsters shall be located, within preferably, or behind buildings, enclosed on all four (4) sides to prevent blowing trash, and screened from public view.

Any development involving the installation of machinery or equipment which emits heat, vapor, fumes, vibration, or noise shall minimize, insofar as practicable, any adverse impact on

neighboring properties and the environment pursuant to the requirements of Article 5, Part 4 Performance Standards.

Interior mechanical space is depicted on the floor plans. See Plan A102. Electrical service connection is not evident on the utility plan. Power lines serving the building must be buried and utility boxes must be screened.

Part 3: Architectural Design Standards

Sec. 6.3.2 Review Standards

(a) Relate development to its environment:

1. Massing, Height and Scale:

The proposed building is large. In an effort to mitigate perceived mass, the structure is broken into several distinct sections defined by recesses, projections, and differing building materials. Storefront fenestration at ground level along Riverside Avenue helps to further define and distinguish the building's primary interface with the public street. Building height differs by section and along the adjacent grades. Height is compliant at 45' as demonstrated by two building height sections. Note that this height limit is predicated on compliance with the senior housing bonus in Sec. 4.4.2 (d) 3 B. Although much larger than the single family homes it will replace, scale of the building is not dissimilar to that of the nearby Riverwatch Condos.

2. Roofs and Rooflines.

A flat roof is proposed albeit in several different sections. Such roof form is common among similar structures and within this mixed use zone.

3. Building Openings

Fenestration is patterned consistently throughout the building and is appropriate for this residential application. As noted above, street level storefront glazing is proposed along Riverside Avenue.

(b) Protection of Important Architectural Resources:

Burlington's architectural and cultural heritage shall be protected through sensitive and respectful redevelopment, rehabilitation, and infill. Where the proposed development involves buildings listed or eligible for listing on a state or national register of historic places, the applicant shall meet the applicable development and design standards pursuant to Sec. 5.4.8. The introduction of new buildings to a historic district listed on a state or national register of historic places shall make every effort to be compatible with nearby historic buildings.

As noted above, none of the single family homes to be removed are not historic. Much of the adjacent development is relatively new. The proposed structure will not adversely impact Burlington's wealth of historic resources.

(c) Protection of Important Public Views:

Not applicable.

(d) Provide an active and inviting street edge:

The proposed building will be set close to Riverside Avenue with a prominent front entry facing the street. Landscaping will soften the hard edge of exposed building foundation, and the embellished front entrance will invite pedestrians from the sidewalk into the building. Storefront glazing will afford visual access into the building from the public sidewalk.

(e) Quality of materials:

All development shall maximize the use of highly durable building materials that extend the life cycle of the building, and reduce maintenance, waste, and environmental impacts. Such materials are particularly important in certain highly trafficked locations such as along major streets, sidewalks, loading areas, and driveways. Efforts to incorporate the use of recycled content materials and building materials and products that are extracted and/or manufactured within the region are highly encouraged.

As is common with other recent residential buildings of similar scale, the building will be clad in cementitious siding (panel and lap) along with sections of corrugated metal siding and metal coping. Painted metal railing and fencing will provide accent and screening. Except for the aluminum storefront windows, most windows will be vinyl.

Owners of historic structures are encouraged to consult with an architectural historian in order to determine the most appropriate repair, restoration or replacement of historic building materials as outlined by the requirements of Art 5, Sec. 5.4.8.

Not applicable.

(f) Reduce energy utilization:

All new construction is required to meet the Guidelines for Energy Efficient Construction pursuant to the requirements of Article VI. Energy Conservation, Section 8 of the City of Burlington Code of Ordinances.

New structures should take advantage of solar access where available, and shall undertake efforts to reduce the impacts of shadows cast on adjacent buildings where practicable, in order to provide opportunities for the use of active and passive solar utilization.

No utilization of renewable energy is evident in the project plans. The building is set far enough from adjacent structures to avoid adverse shadow impacts.

(g) Make advertising features complementary to the site:

Some placeholder signage is depicted in the project plans and should be removed. All exterior signs are subject to separate zoning permit.

(h) Integrate infrastructure into the building design:

See Section 6.2.2. (p), above.

(i) Make spaces secure and safe:

Construction shall comply with all required building and life safety codes as determined by the building inspector and fire marshal.

Building entrances/entry points shall be visible and adequately lit, and intercom systems for multi-family housing should be incorporated where possible, to maximize personal safety.

Exterior entries will be illuminated as depicted in the outdoor lighting plan. Intercom systems are recommended to maximize personal safety.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Recommend approval and forward to the Development Review Board subject to the following conditions:

1. Provide confirmation as to onsite soil testing for potential contamination and results.
2. Demonstrate why a second, separate driveway is needed for service vehicle access.
Otherwise, remove the second driveway and reconfigure service vehicle access.
3. Provide a fencing detail.
4. Revise parking lot lighting to levels compliant with Sec. 5.5.2.
5. Power lines serving the building must be buried and utility boxes must be screened.
6. Remove all outdoor signage from the project plans.